

## PUR 3463 Sports Communication – Spring 2025

Course number: 26979  
Tuesday, 3:00-6:00 p.m. – Weimer Hall 1076

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Instructor: Steve McClain  
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Office Hours: Thursday and Friday, 8-9 a.m. or by appointment

### Required Texts

The following textbooks are recommended, not required, and can be used as supplemental study guides for the exams

- Schultz, B., Caskey, P. H., Esherick, C. (2014). *Media Relations in Sport* (Fourth Edition). FiT Publishing. ISBN: 9781935412946.
- Stoldt, G. C., Dittmore, S. W., Branvold, S. E. (2012). *Sport Public Relations: Managing Stakeholder Communication* (Second Edition). Human Kinetics. ISBN: 9780736090384.

### Course Description

*Welcome to PUR3463: Sports Communication. This course offers instruction and training for both basic and advanced skills and strategies for public relations in sports organizations. From the perspective of the sports communication professional, education will include developing integrated external and internal communication plans to align with organizational mission and goals, while understanding PR ethics and the tasks of engaging with the media, event management, crisis management and communication training for internal constituents.*

## Course Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the basic skills necessary to effectively carry out day-to-day responsibilities in sports communications professions.
- Demonstrate ability to generate content, including effective writing, from a sports communication perspective.
- Demonstrate ability to develop integrated communications strategies, including internal communication plans, to support a sports organization's mission and goals effectively.
- Distinguish between sports communication perspectives and sports journalism.
- Demonstrate the ability to develop event management plans for a sports communication department.
- Demonstrate understanding and skill strategies in handling negative publicity and communications crises in sports organizations.
- Demonstrate skill for assisting athletes, coaches, sports executives, and owners in handling media interviews effectively.
- Demonstrate ability to manage the use of social media by the organization, staff members, and athletes.
- Demonstrate understanding of the ethics and values of sports communications.
- Develop an understanding of professional opportunities in the career of sports communications.

### ***College of Journalism and Communications Objectives***

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;

- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work

### Key Course Policies

#### **Late or Missed Work:**

Deadlines for each assignment will be given and students are expected to meet them. Late assignments will automatically lose a full letter grade for each week it is late (e.g. B to a C). Some consideration, however, might be given (at the discretion of the instructor) if there are extenuating circumstances such as prolonged hospitalization, family death, or extended individual sickness; however, you need to notify me before the deadline is missed, not after the fact.

#### **Attendance:**

This course focuses on class participation and group discussion. Your attendance is an important aspect of this course. Excessive absences will harm your grade. You are responsible for notifying me in advance of the cause of your absence and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider. For further information on attendance policy, please go [here](#).

#### **University Honesty Policy:**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with me. I will also occasionally use real experiences and information from my role as a PR staffer at the University Athletic Association and any of those experiences and information are for educational purposes only and are not to be reported, shared outside the classroom or with media entities. Any violation regarding those experiences will also be considered a violation of the Honor code.

I will document and report all honor code violations, including cheating and plagiarism. The minimum penalty for a violation of the honor code is a zero on the assignment or exam but may be higher depending on the severity of the violation.

### **AI Policy for Student Work**

In this class I want you to produce all your own work without generative AI's assistance. It is important for me to be able to ascertain what you know and can produce unaided on your own. The use of generative AI for your assignments in this class is a violation of the honor code as you are presenting content as your own that was not fully created by you. There are various AI detection tools available (built within Canvas and externally such as ZeroGPT), and many AI platforms follow very formulaic response patterns. If I am concerned that your work is not your own, I will try to verify the originality of your work and if evidence is found that your work is AI generated I will submit your assignment as violating the honor code.

### **Students Requiring Accommodations:**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

### **Course Evaluation:**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations [here](#). Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students [here](#).

## **Grading and Assignments**

### **Grading:**

I will be as fair and impartial as is humanly possible in the grading process. Each of you will be graded on the same criteria. Grades are awarded on the basis of quality, not the amount of time expended. I will round up (e.g., if you get 89.9 points, you earn a A- not a B+). I will keep grades posted on Canvas and it is your responsibility to check on your progress throughout the semester. See key course policies above for late work. Grade components for the class are as follows:

### ***Attendance and Active Participation: 70 points (14 x 5 points)***

Attendance and active participation for the 15 classes are required. Students will be expected to participate in various interactive exercises and be fully engaged unless cleared in advance with the professor. You are responsible for notifying the professor in advance of the cause of

your absence when possible and, if it is due to illness, provide a note from your medical provider. For further information on attendance policy, please go [here](#).

**Individual Assignments: 180 points (9 x 20 points)**

Individual assignments will provide an opportunity for you to follow up and report on topics from previous class in various aspects of media relations area and sports communication.

**Individual Writing Assignment: 50 points (1 x 50 points)**

Individual writing assignment will provide an opportunity for you to follow up and report on topics from previous class in various aspects of the media relations and sports communication.

**Individual Writing Quiz: 50 points (1 x 50 points)**

Individual writing quiz will provide an opportunity for you to report on a topic from class in a real time setting.

**Exams: 250 points (Exam 1 – 100 points; Exam 2 – 150 points)**

Exams will be designed to test the students’ understanding of key concepts of media relations and sports communications topics discussed in class.

**Final Project/Presentation: 150 points**

For the final project, you will detail a professional or collegiate sports organization/athletic department’s communications operation. This presentation will need to be comprehensive yet, concise. You will have **8-10 minutes** to provide the information in your presentation.

Grading follows current [UF grading policies](#). *The grading scale for the course is as follows:*

A	94.0 – 100%	C	74.0 – 76.99%
A-	90.0 – 93.99%	C-	70.0 – 73.99%
B+	87.0 – 89.99%	D+	67.0 – 69.99%
B	84.0 – 86.99%	D	64.0 – 66.99%
B-	80.0 – 83.99%	D-	60.0 – 63.99%
C+	77.0 – 79.99%	E	below 60%

**Tentative Course Schedule\***

<b>Week 1</b> January 14	Introduction to Sports and Media/Influential Media
<b>Week 2</b> January 21	Introducing Sports Public Relations and Careers in Sports Communications and Communication Specialists

<b>Week 3</b> January 28	Developing Integrated Communication Plans and Key Publics and Lab Work
<b>Week 4</b> February 4	Developing Internal Communication Plans and Lab Work
<b>Week 5</b> February 11	Engaging Key Constituents in Social Media/Communication Managers
<b>Week 6</b> February 18	Preparing for External Communication and Media/Presentations and Public Speaking
<b>Week 7</b> February 25	Event Management and Event Preview
<b>Week 8</b> March 4	Exam 1/Event Recap
<b>Week 9</b> March 11	Event Recaps – Writing Quiz
<b>Week 10</b> March 25	Publicity Campaigns/Presentations and Public Speaking
<b>Week 11</b> April 1	Crisis Management
<b>Week 12</b> April 8	Unmediated Communication Tactics Legal and Ethical Issues in Sports Communications
<b>Week 13</b> April 15	Final Presentation Group 1
<b>Week 14</b> April 22	Final Presentation Group 2
April 23	On Line Final Exam Due

## Standard UF Policy Information and Links

### **Software Use:**

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

### **Student Privacy:**

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please go [here](#).

### **In-Class Recording:**

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Policy on Course Syllabi 3 UF, Academic Affairs, July 28th, 2021 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

### Campus Resources:

**U Matter, We Care:** If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

**Student Health Care Center:** Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).

**University Police Department:** Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

**UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:** For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

### Academic Resources:

**E-learning technical support:** Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

**Career Connections Center:** Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

**Library Support:** Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

**Teaching Center:** Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

**Writing Studio:** 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

**Student Complaints On-Campus:** Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.

**On-Line Students Complaints:** View the [Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).